

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A sneeze guard comprising:

at least one post;

a bracket assembly coupled to the post such that the bracket assembly is movable relative to the post, wherein the bracket assembly includes a locking mechanism that is operable to lock the bracket assembly to the post at a certain location on the post; and

a panel coupled to the bracket assembly.

2. A sneeze guard as in claim 1, wherein the bracket assembly further comprises a housing that is receivable about the post and an arm pivotally coupled to the housing, and wherein the panel is coupled to the arm.

3. A sneeze guard as in claim 2, wherein the locking mechanism comprises an insert that is disposed within the housing, a locking bar positioned between the housing and the insert, and an actuator to force the locking bar against the insert to cause the insert to constrict about the post.

4. A sneeze guard as in claim 3, wherein the actuator comprises a screw extending through a threaded opening in the housing so as to be in contact with the locking bar.

5. A sneeze guard as in claim 3, wherein the post comprises an elongate cylindrical body, wherein the housing includes a cylindrical section, and wherein the insert comprises a tubular sleeve having an elongate slot such that when the locking bar is forced against the sleeve, the slot begins to close to permit the sleeve to constrict about the post.

6. A sneeze guard as in claim 2, wherein the housing includes a plurality of teeth, wherein the arm includes a plurality of teeth to interlock with the housing teeth, and further comprising a screw to pivotally couple the arm to the housing.

7. A sneeze guard as in claim 2, wherein the arm includes a coupling mechanism which couples the panel to the arm.

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1 8. A sneeze guard as in claim 7, wherein the arm includes an aperture,
2 and wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a cap insertable into the aperture and a
3 screw to secure the cap to the housing, and wherein the panel is held between the cap and
4 the arm.

1 9. A sneeze guard as in claim 8, wherein the aperture and the cap are
2 keyed to prevent rotation of the cap relative to the arm.

1 10. A sneeze guard as in claim 1, further comprising a base, and
2 wherein the post is coupled to the base.

1 11. A sneeze guard as in claim 10, further comprising at least one
2 stabilizer coupled to the base.

1 12. A sneeze guard as in claim 10, wherein the base includes a
2 plurality of holes sized to receive the post, and wherein the post is inserted into one of the
3 holes, and further comprising a plug that is inserted into another one of the holes.

1 13. A sneeze guard as in claim 1, further comprising a second post and
2 a second bracket assembly coupled to the second post, and wherein the second bracket
3 assembly is also coupled to the panel.

1 14. A sneeze guard as in claim 1, further comprising a second bracket
2 assembly coupled to the post and a second panel coupled to the second bracket assembly.

1 15. A sneeze guard as in claim 1, wherein the bracket assembly
2 includes a pair of arms, and further comprising a panel coupled to each arm.

1 16. A sneeze guard as in claim 1, wherein the panel is constructed of a
2 clear material.

1 17. A coupling device, comprising:
2 a housing that is adapted to be received about a post;
3 an insert disposed within the housing;
4 a locking bar positioned between the housing and the insert; and
5 an actuator to force the locking bar against the insert to cause the insert to
6 constrict about the post, thereby preventing movement of the housing relative to the post.

1 18. A device as in claim 17, wherein the actuator comprises a screw
2 extending through a threaded opening in the housing so as to be in contact with the
3 locking bar.

1 19. A device as in claim 17, wherein the housing includes a cylindrical
2 section, and wherein the insert comprises a tubular sleeve having an elongate slot such
3 that when the locking bar is forced against the sleeve, the slot begins to close to permit
4 the sleeve to constrict about the post.

1 20. A device as in claim 17, further comprising an arm operably
2 coupled to the housing.

21. A method for protecting displayed food items, the method
2 comprising:
3 providing a sneeze guard comprising at least one post, a bracket assembly
4 coupled to the post such that the bracket assembly is movable relative to the post, wherein
5 the bracket assembly includes a locking mechanism that is operable to lock the bracket
6 assembly to the post at a certain location on the post, and a panel coupled to the bracket
7 assembly; and
8 positioning the sneeze guard such that the panel is positioned between
9 displayed food and a viewing location.

1 22. A method as in claim 21, further comprising operating the locking
2 mechanism to unlock the bracket assembly, and moving the bracket assembly along the
3 post to adjust the height of the panel relative to the food.

1 23. A method as in claim 21, wherein the bracket assembly further
2 comprises a housing that is receivable about the post and an arm pivotably coupled to the
3 housing, and wherein the panel is coupled to the arm; and further comprising rotating the
4 arm relative to the housing to adjust the angle of the panel relative to the post.

1 24. A method as in claim 23, wherein the locking mechanism
2 comprises an insert that is disposed within the housing, a locking bar positioned between
3 the housing and the insert, and an actuator to force the locking bar against the insert to

cause the insert to constrict about the post, and further comprising operating the actuator to constrict the insert about the post in a non-marking manner.

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